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**Minority Business Development Agency
Ranked Top Government Agency for Business Opportunities**

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 31, 2005 -- Today, the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) was recognized as the number one government agency providing business opportunities to women and minority owned businesses. The honor was extended to MBDA as the result of votes received from over 350,000 women and minority business owners from around the nation. This award, produced annually by DiversityBusiness.com, was presented at the 5th Annual Multicultural Business Conference in Mashantucket, CT

"On behalf of the Minority Business Development Agency and our network of minority business development centers across the nation, I am delighted to learn MBDA tops the list of all government agencies being recognized for providing business opportunities to multi-culturally owned business enterprises. Placement at the top of this list affirms that our strategy for growing and expanding minority business enterprises (MBE) is achieving results," stated Anita Cooke Wells, Director, Business Development, MBDA.

During FY 2004, the MBDA assisted over 5,200 MBE clients with business management and technical assistance services. The Agency delivered \$1.6 billion in award transactions for MBE clients, exceeding the national goal of \$1.2 billion. The average value of a contract obtained for a client was \$443,066 and the average value of a financial package secured for a client topped \$877,000.

MBDA is the only federal agency created specifically to foster the establishment and growth of minority owned businesses in America. Through its network of funded Minority Business Development Centers, Native American Business Development Centers, Business Resource Centers and Minority Business Opportunity Committees, MBDA offers a wide range of business services and opportunities to minority entrepreneurs, including contract and procurement matchmaking services and access to capital packaging. More information and the location of MBDA funded Centers can be found at www.mbda.gov.

The fifth annual list of Fortune 500 companies and Government agencies was produced by DiversityBusiness.com from votes collected electronically through a secure site. The voting business owners based their decisions on such factors as the volume, consistency and quality of business opportunities granted to women and minority-owned companies.

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